

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

Claims 1-14 (Cancelled).

Please add new claims 15-31 as follows:

15. (New) An aircraft comprising a landing gear moveable between a stowed position and a deployed position, the landing gear including a wheel having a rim around which there is mounted a tire, wherein the region at the junction between the tire and the rim is shaped such that on at least one side of the wheel, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of said region interfaces smoothly with the surfaces, presented to the airflow, of both the tire and the wheel, whereby noise resulting from the interaction of the landing gear and the airflow during approach of the aircraft on landing may be reduced as a result of the gap, which would otherwise exist between the tire and the rim, being closed.

16. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein at least a part of said region is flexible and so arranged that it may be moved manually to reveal a portion of the tire that is otherwise hidden from view.

17. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined at least partly by an elastically deformable material.

18. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by a multiplicity of flexible elements extending radially across the junction between the tire and the rim.

19. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by brushes, which bridge a gap between the wheel rim and the tire.

20. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein at least a portion of said region is so configured that, once the force between the wheels and the ground exceeds a first given threshold force, it moves out of a gap that said region bridges when the aircraft is airborne, and once the force between the wheels and the ground drops to or below a second given threshold force, it moves back to the position in which it bridges the gap.

21. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by a sealing element, which bridges a gap between the wheel rim and the tire.

22. (New) An aircraft according to claim 21, wherein the sealing element is formed from liquid sealant material that has been solidified.

23. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the region at the junction between the tire and the rim is shaped such that on both sides of the wheel, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of said region interfaces smoothly with the surfaces, presented to the airflow, of both the tire and the wheel.

24. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by a separate component part of the wheel.

25. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein, on at least one side of the wheel during use of the aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of the wheel/tire assembly presented to the airflow within the region bounded by the widest part of the tire is substantially smooth in shape.

26. (New) An aircraft according to claim 25, wherein said surface of the wheel/tire assembly is substantially planar.

27. (New) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the aircraft is of a size suitable for carrying more than 50 passengers.

28. (New) An aircraft landing gear including a wheel having a rim around which there is mounted a tire, wherein the region at the junction between the tire and the rim is shaped such that on at least one side of the wheel, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of said region interfaces smoothly with the surfaces, presented to the airflow, of both the tire and the wheel.

29. (New) A method of reducing noise caused by an aircraft during approach of the aircraft on landing including a step of manufacturing an aircraft according to claim 15.

30. (New) A method according to claim 39 further including a step of modifying an existing design of an aircraft in order to reduce noise caused by the landing gear of the aircraft.

31. (New) A component for use as said separate component of an aircraft according to claim 24.